

January 2001

MISSISSIPPI RIVER LEVEE

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District

Vicinity end of Broadway Street, New Orleans

Mile 101.5 above head of passes (AHP), east bank

By ELL PILIE, Engineering Division

This reach of levee is an integral part of the 512 miles of mainline Mississippi River levees and floodwalls in the New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The levee at the end of Broadway is 15 to 20 feet high and about 200 feet wide at the base.

The levee is built to the authorized Mississippi River and Tributaries Project design grade and section, meaning it provides the required flood protection from the "Project Design Flood" on the Mississippi River. The project design flowline (flood stage) at this location is elevation 20.0 feet above mean sea level (elevation 0.0). Based on recent levee surveys, the crown of the levee at this location is at elevation 25.0. This means the levee has 5 feet of freeboard or additional protection above the project flood elevation.

The floodside face of the levee is paved with concrete slope paving which prevents erosion slope by ship and wind driven waves during high river stages and storms. The levee is constructed of clay material, which minimizes, but doesn't completely stop, seepage of river water through the levee during high river stages. All levees seep to some extent due to the nature of the soils in the area and other circumstances.

Inspection of the levee is performed yearly by the Orleans Levee District in conjunction with the Corps of Engineers and the State of Louisiana Department of Transportation. During "flood fights", when the river stage exceeds 15.0 feet at the Carrollton Gage*, the levee is inspected twice daily, seven days a week until the flood event is over. This occurs all along the river within the New Orleans District.

Because of the work by the Corps of Engineers, levee boards and the state Department of Transportation, we haven't had flooding of the lands protected by the Mississippi River levee system in 52 years. In March 1949, the levee on the west bank at Wilkinson Point, upstream of Port Allen, was overtopped and crevassed. This flooded a portion of West Baton Rouge Parish. Other levees have failed since 1949. But none have completely collapsed, and no flooding has occurred on the protected side of the levee.

* **Carrollton Gauge:** Mile 102.8 above head of passes, at New Orleans District headquarters.

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